

## In the Claims

1           1.     [Currently Amended] A method of forming a head assembly  
2 comprising:  
3           providing a base member;  
4           forming a plurality of head components upon the base member  
5 individually adapted to communicate information relative to media;  
6           providing a plurality of component regions between respective ones of the  
7 head components and a path of travel of the media; ~~and~~  
8           providing a support region intermediate adjacent ones of the head  
9 components and positioned to support the media moving along the path of  
10 travel, the support region comprising a material different than a material of the  
11 component regions; and  
12           providing an insulating layer and wherein the providing the support region  
13 comprises removing portions of the insulating layer to form the support region.

1           2.     [Original] The method in accordance with claim 1 wherein the  
2 providing the support region comprises providing the support region comprising a  
3 material having a hardness greater than a material of the component regions.

1           3.     [Original] The method in accordance with claim 1 wherein the  
2 providing the support region comprises providing the support region comprising a  
3 material having a greater resistance to wear than a material of the component  
4 regions.

1           4.     [Original] The method in accordance with claim 1 wherein the  
2 forming comprises forming the head components to individually comprise a read  
3 element and a write element.

1           5.     [Original] The method in accordance with claim 1 wherein the  
2 forming comprises forming the head components to communicate using Linear  
3 Tape Open technology.

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1           6.     Cancel.

1           7.     [Original] The method in accordance with claim 1 wherein the  
2 providing the support region comprises forming the support region upon a cover  
3 member and placing the cover member adjacent the base member.

1           8.     [Original] The method in accordance with claim 7 wherein the  
2 forming the support region upon the cover member comprises removing portions  
3 of the cover member.

1           9.     [Original] The method in accordance with claim 1 wherein the  
2 providing the support region comprises depositing support region material over  
3 the base member.

1           10.    [Original] The method in accordance with claim 1 wherein the  
2 providing the base member comprises providing a wafer substrate.

1           11.    [Original] The method in accordance with claim 1 wherein the  
2 forming comprises forming head components individually configured to  
3 communicate digital information relative to the media comprising a magnetic  
4 tape.

Claims 12-20 are canceled.

1           21.    [Previously Presented] The method in accordance with claim 1  
2 wherein the providing the component regions comprises providing the  
3 component regions immediately adjacent to the media moving along the path of  
4 travel.

1           22.    [Previously Presented] The method in accordance with claim 1  
2 wherein the providing the component regions comprises positioning the  
3 component regions to contact the media moving along the path of travel.

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1           23.   Cancel.

1           24.   [Previously Presented] A method of forming a head assembly  
2 comprising:  
3           providing a base member;  
4           forming a plurality of head components upon the base member  
5 individually adapted to communicate information relative to media;  
6           providing a plurality of component regions adjacent respective ones of the  
7 head components and a path of travel of the media;  
8           providing a support region intermediate adjacent ones of the head  
9 components and positioned to support the media moving along the path of  
10 travel, the support region comprising a material different than a material of the  
11 component regions; and  
12           providing an insulating layer, and wherein the providing the support region  
13 comprises removing portions of the insulating layer to form the support region.

1           25.   [New] A method of forming a head assembly comprising:  
2           providing a base member;  
3           forming a plurality of head components upon the base member  
4 individually adapted to communicate information relative to media;  
5           providing a plurality of component regions between respective ones of the  
6 head components and a path of travel of the media;  
7           providing a support region intermediate adjacent ones of the head  
8 components and positioned to support the media moving along the path of  
9 travel, the support region comprising a material different than a material of the  
10 component regions;  
11           wherein the providing the support region comprises forming the support  
12 region upon a cover member and placing the cover member adjacent the base  
13 member; and  
14           wherein the forming the support region upon the cover member comprises  
15 removing portions of the cover member.

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